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FROM THE COEUR D'ALENE PRESS

Not your father's automobile

Posted: Tuesday, Sep 30, 2008 - 11:00:04 pm PDT

Email this story Printer friendly version By MAUREEN DOLAN

Staff writer

SHAWN GUST/Press

Chris Bjorkman of Coeur d'Alene, right, holds a lithium-ione battery as Jerry Asher explains battery technology in electric cars Tuesday during his visit to North Idaho College's Automotive Technology program.

Auto tech students get a show-and-tell lesson on electric vehicles

COEUR d'ALENE -- A motoring public that plugs in more and pumps less.

That's the vision electric vehicle enthusiasts shared Tuesday with North Idaho College automotive technology students.

Members of the Panhandle Electric Vehicle Association paid a visit to the NIC campus bringing several types of electrically powered vehicles with them for students to view.

"This will be the industry standard in a couple of years," said Gordy Ormesher, a Hayden Lake resident and president of PEVA, the regional chapter of the Electric Auto Association, a national nonprofit educational organization that has been promoting public awareness of electric vehicle technology since 1967.

At PEVA's monthly meetings, club members learn how to build their own electric cars, Ormesher said.

"We're part of a gas roots (sic) movement to change this country one car at a time," Ormesher said.

Joining PEVA members' vehicle's at NIC was the Spirit of DC, a 2005 Toyota Prius hybrid converted to plug-in electric.

Driven by Jerry Asher, an electric car enthusiast and retired military man from Arizona, the Spirit of DC is on a nationwide tour sponsored by the Electric Vehicle Association of Greater Washington, DC.

"It's a team effort to line up with all our sister chapters to let the public know about plug-in vehicles and the power of electricity in automobiles," Asher said.

Asher's plan is to take the vehicle to the capitols of all 48 mainland states. Boise was the 34th state capitol the vehicle recently rolled into.

Tuesday's visit to NIC was the Spirit of DC's first time on a community college campus.

"It's kind of different for me because I'm a big truck driver. I'm wondering how this is going to work for over-sized vehicles," said NIC auto technology student Chris Bjorkman.

He and his classmates said while it's not the main focus of their studies, the emergence of Toyota's Prius has led to more lessons about "the high voltage stuff."

Bjorkman said they expect more such lessons in the future, "if it does save money."

For Ormesher, a Spokane firefighter who started "playing with electric cars" about four years ago, there's no question that moving to electric powered vehicles is cost-effective.

"We run for one-eighteenth the cost of a gas vehicle. The savings are huge," Ormesher said. "It's also a lot of fun."

But, it's more than a hobby for Ormesher. Going electric has a higher purpose.

"We're going through more than 20 million barrels of oil per day. That's one-quarter of the world's production," Ormesher said. "With 300 million Chinese coming online to drive within the next few years, what does that say about what's happening with fuel supplies?"

It's not about discouraging people from driving gas-powered vehicles, he said, but rather to give them a choice that will reduce the nation's dependence on foreign oil.

PEVA meets monthly and has an average attendance of about 45.

There is no cost to attend the meetings and learn how to convert a vehicle from gas power to electric.

Ormesher said there are already about 20 electric vehicles being driven in Kootenai County.

Mike Dawson of Post Falls owns one of them, a 1993 Geo Tracker he recently converted to pure electric.

An engineer at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, Dawson had experience restoring gas-powered cars.

"I wanted to try something different," he said.

Dawson, who had the Tracker on display for the students at NIC, bought it with the intention of converting it.

Including the price of the vehicle, the conversion cost Dawson roughly \$8,500.

"It's very affordable," he said.

The Tracker's 120 volt system includes 4 batteries in the front engine compartment and six batteries in the rear.

It has a 25-mile per charge range and costs about 50 cents to charge.

At 2 cents per mile, Dawson said it's a huge savings over 30 cents per mile for a gas-powered car.

He hopes to be able to use the Tracker to make his daily commute to work, but because it's 27 miles each way, there are a few impediments.

Dawson has to find a spot at work to plug-in and recharge the car so he can make the return trip home.

The 25-mile per charge range is another problem.

"I might have to up the voltage," Dawson said. "I'm going to do some more engineering to get the mileage up."

For most people, Ormesher said a 25-mile per charge range will work because transportation department studies have shown most of the population drives less than 35 miles per day.

He said charging stations are springing up in electric vehicle friendly communities throughout the nation.

In Boulder, Colo., there are already downtown parking meters that offer free parking and free charging for electric vehicles, he said.

Critics of electric vehicle technology have cited the high cost of batteries as being prohibitive and question whether the cost of fuel to ship parts for vehicle assembly is counterproductive to the sustainability of hybrid vehicles.

The cost of batteries is coming down and the duration of their life cycles is increasing, Ormesher said and by converting an existing vehicle from gas to electric, the environmental impact of that vehicle is greatly reduced.

"You have the ultimate green car that normally would be dead and you're resurrecting it and putting it back onto the road," Ormesher said.

FROM THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

No new education news stories posted online today.

FROM THE MOSCOW PULLMAN DAILY NEWS (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

Substitutes hard to come by for school districts

By Yesenia Amaro, Daily News staff writer

Posted on: Tuesday, September 30, 2008

The pool of substitute teachers on the Palouse isn't big enough to satisfy the needs of all the area's school districts.

Some districts have taken special measures to ensure they can find teachers in a pinch including the use of noncertified teachers and increasing substitute pay

The Palouse School District is seeking emergency substitute teachers, and other area districts use them occasionally as well. Anyone with a bachelor's degree can apply for an Emergency Substitute Certificate from the state of Washington, which allows them to serve as a substitute for up to three years.

Districts can use emergency substitutes when there is a shortage of qualified substitutes, and must submit a request for each proposed emergency substitute to the Washington state Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Potential substitutes must prove they have earned a bachelor's degree, and the district superintendent must sign and justify the need for an emergency substitute on the individual's application. The OSPI Certification Office can issue a certificate that is only good for the district in which a substitute applied.

Last year more than 1,100 Emergency Substitute Teacher certifications were granted in Washington state, OSPI spokeswoman Shirley Skidmore said.

Palouse Superintendent Bev Fox said the district has been advertising for emergency substitutes.

"It takes a lot of substitute teachers to fill the need in the schools in the area," she said. "A lot of small schools struggle finding substitutes."

Fox said there have been days when the district was not able to get substitute teachers and has had to combine classes to accommodate those who are left without a teacher.

The Palouse School District hires four to six substitute teachers per week on average, she said.

To help attract more substitutes, the Palouse and Garfield school districts have increased their pay to \$100 per day, up from \$85.

"It's been five years since the last increase," Fox said. The districts decided to increase the pay after some substitute teachers indicated that high gas prices made them unable to afford to travel to the districts.

"We want to stay competitive with other schools in the area," she said.

Garfield Superintendent Zane Wells said his district is just looking for substitute teachers in general, and hasn't yet needed to seek emergency substitutes.

Kathy Brown, personnel coordinator at the Pullman School District, said Pullman schools occasionally employ emergency substitute teachers.

"We went into a shortage on occasions last spring and we were having a shortage one day this fall as well," she said. "It seems that we always need more."

The Pullman School District pays substitute teachers \$103 for a full day and \$51.50 for half a day's work.

Brown said the district increased its substitute pay this fall "to keep up and hopefully attract more substitutes."

Moscow Superintendent Candis Donicht said her district has faced similar problems.

"This is kind of a chronic issue for all the school districts," she said.

Donicht said the Moscow School District announced at the beginning of the school year that it would accept substitute teachers who hold a bachelor's degree from any college or university.

Their bachelor's degree "does not necessarily need to be in teaching," she said.

The Moscow School District pays its substitute teachers \$75 per day, said Heidi Holman, with the district's human resources office. In Idaho, substitute teachers don't need to go through an extra application process as they do in Washington, and potential substitute teachers apply at the district level.

The Colfax School District increased its substitute pay this year, from \$99 a day to \$103. Superintendent Michael Morgan said the district examines its substitute pay scale on a yearly basis.

Morgan said his district only struggles to find substitute teachers when there is a regional conference and all of the area's other school districts are trying to get substitute teachers from the same pool.

OUR VIEW: Gifted program deserves full support (Editorial)

By Doug Bauer

Posted on: Tuesday, September 30, 2008

Much has been said and written about the need for remedial instruction in our education system, but there are many students on the other end of the spectrum who aren't receiving the support they need.

"Gifted" students make up a portion of the student population that often is underserved in a public school setting.

That is presently the case within the Pullman School District, which has been forced to put its Highly Capable Student program on hiatus while it searches for a qualified teacher to educate students considered to be among the district's best and brightest.

Pullman is seeking its fourth teacher for the program in as many years. District officials say it would be easier to find a long-term employee if the position weren't part-time.

Superintendent Paul Sturm hopes to have the job filled soon, and said the program won't be up and running again until mid-October at the earliest.

That's a shame.

Pullman has a proud history of turning out exceptional scholars, and undoubtedly there are students in need of challenges above and beyond those they're currently getting.

District officials should seek ways to pay for a full-time teacher to oversee the program, which serves students in fourth and fifth grades and will be expanded to include sixth-graders as well.

Pullman High School was one of four schools in Washington and 320 nationwide that recently was named 2008 No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Schools.

The entire community deserves credit for that honor, but the distinction wouldn't have been possible without gifted students setting the pace for their peers.

The cost of slowing those students' ability to learn at a higher level is akin to leaving them behind.

FROM THE LEWISTON TRIBUNE (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

No new education news stories posted online today.

FROM THE IDAHO-PRESS TRIBUNE, NAMPA

Emmett school bond fails

Updated 2 hours 18 minutes ago Amid questions about an anonymous, last-minute mailer urging voters to reject the Emmett School District's \$20 million bond option, the measure failed to garner the 66.6 percent super-majority needed to pass on Tuesday and was rejected by Gem County voters.

A total of 1,714, or 52.6 percent of the voters supported the bond, and 1,546, or 47.4 percent, voted against it.

"We're disappointed," Emmett School District Superintendent Sue Beitia said. "There's been a lot of hard work by a lot of people, and we certainly appreciate it."

Beitia was unsure how the district would proceed to address its financial and academic needs.

"We're going to have to go over these numbers and see what they mean," she said.

Board of Trustees President Maria Salazar expressed her frustration over the mailer that began showing up in Gem County mailboxes during the middle of last week without a disclaimer.

"I cannot express how angry I feel about this kind of literature," Salazar said while holding up a copy of the flyer when the board convened after the votes were tallied Tuesday night. "I believe there was an underhanded kind of effort to bring this down, and they did."

Should district officials decide to proceed with another bond, it will be six months before they are legally allowed to do so.

FROM THE IDAHO STATESMAN

Prospective students invited to CWI open house

- STATESMAN STAFF

Edition Date: 10/01/08

College of Western Idaho will host an open house at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Thursday and 10 a.m. Friday at the main campus, 5500 University Way, Nampa.

Prospective students will learn how to apply for admission, what programs are available and how to apply for financial aid.

Academic classes begin in January; professional-technical classes in fall 2009.

FROM THE TWIN FALLS TIMES-NEWS

No new education news stories posted online today.

FROM THE IDAHO STATE JOURNAL (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

Tradition trumps borders for some

BY YANN RANAIVO
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POCATELLO — Whether or not School District 25 decides to approve proposed boundary changes, Gerald Holmes does not intend to change family tradition.

“I went to Pocatello (High School) and he’s going to Pocatello regardless of the boundary change,” Holmes said about his son, who will start high school next year.

Holmes made the comments following a public meeting with some District 25 board members on Tuesday.

Board members were at the Pocatello High School library where they presented the proposal to change existing high school boundaries.

The school district is in the process of going through Pocatello, Highland and Century high schools to gather public input on a plan aimed at evening out the number of students enrolled in each school.

Responding to growth in Chubbuck and northwestern Pocatello, District 25 began drawing up the boundary adjustments a little more than a year ago and board members are confident the proposed changes will strike a stronger balance for the number of students attending each school.

Although some parents, such as Holmes, were adamant to stick with their current plans, they expressed support that changes were necessary due to the large growth within the Highland High School boundary.

home boundaries. He said the proposals, which are based on closed boundary estimates, will more evenly distribute the number of students in each of the three high schools.

The first option shifts the Gibson Jack and Johnny Creek roads’ area over to Century’s boundary. The two remaining options give Pocatello more boundaries west of Interstate 15 in the northern part of the Gate City.

Reed said the District 25 board has the authority to implement the boundary changes, but is seeking public input. If changes are announced, he said they won’t be done until 2010 at the earliest.

“There are changes that are striking our community and we need to be prepared,” he said.

“It’s tough,” Holmes said. “But my hope is that the board does what’s best (for the future) of the district.”

District 25’s proposed plan includes three boundary changes that attempt to shift more Highland area students to Pocatello High School, and in turn, some Poky kids would go to Century High Schools.

Bart Reed, the district’s director of business operations, said more than 70 percent of Pocatello’s growth in recent years has been in the northern portion near Highland. Part of the growth, he said, has resulted in Highland High recording a far greater number than its two counterparts.

Reed said about 90 percent of students in the Gate City attend high school in their

FROM THE IDAHO FALLS POST REGISTER (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

No new education news stories posted online today.